Panchayati Raj

3542

FEBRUARY 1964

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL ... TRAINING CENTRE
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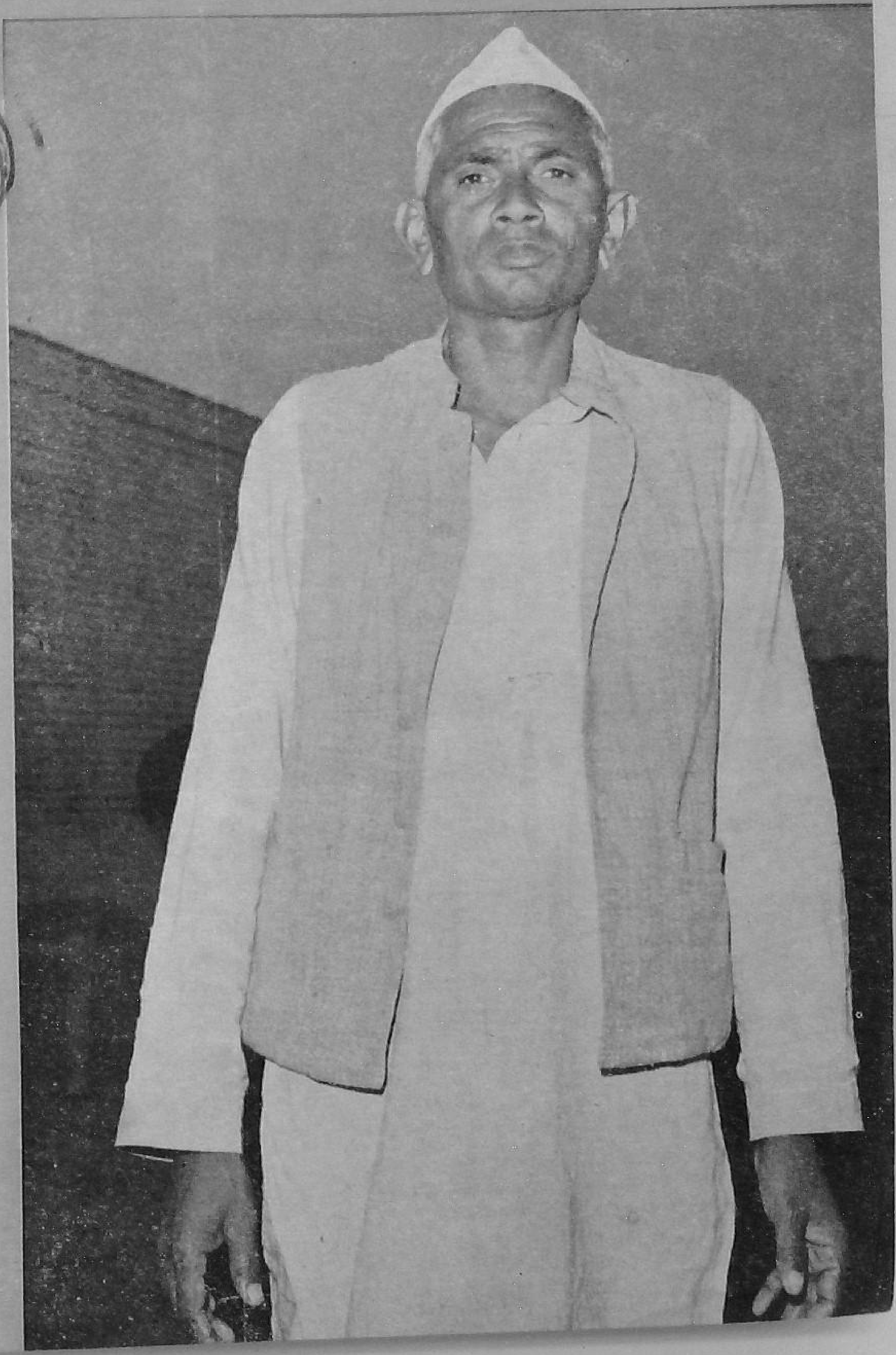
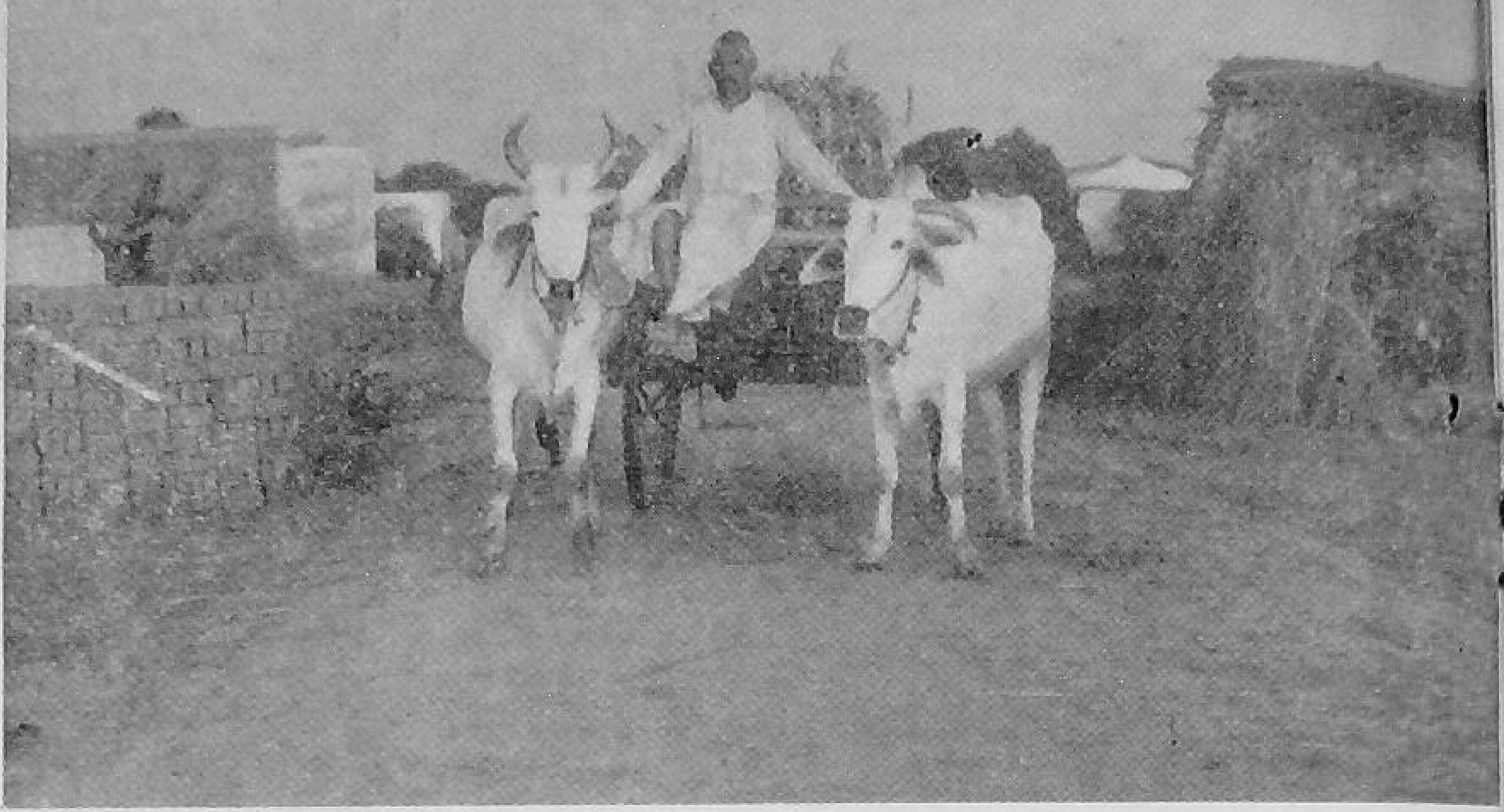


[SH]RI PREM RAJ, *aged 35 years [of] village Sungarpur near Delhi. [Th]ough he has lost his village as well [as] Pradhanship, he has not lost hope [of] building up a new village. He is [he]roically striving to get a new lease [of] life for his village community.*

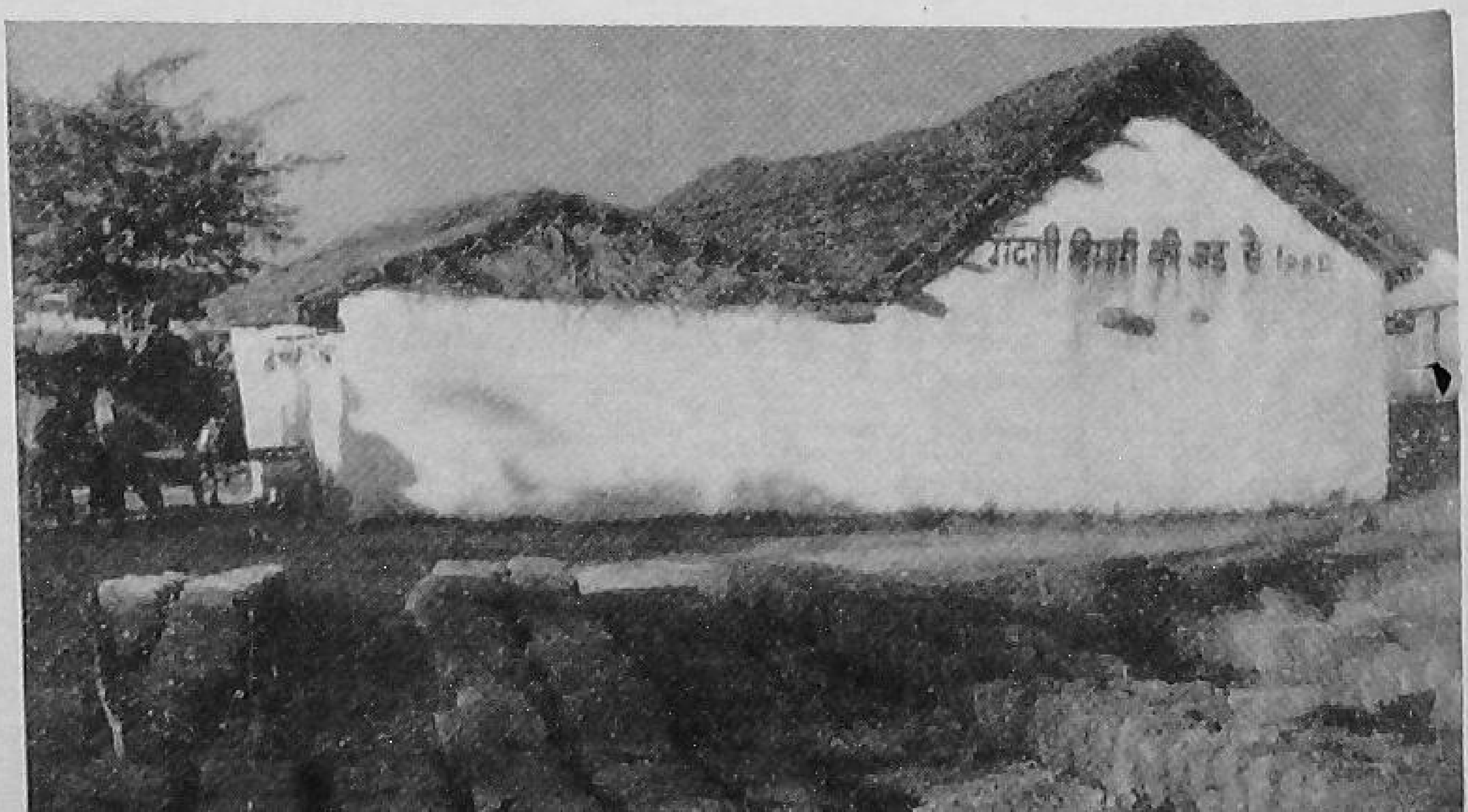
SUNGARPUR,

A NEW VILLAGE COMES UP



A cart laden with sugarcane is moving on the newly-laid roads which have been brick-paved

A damsel carrying water from the newly constructed well



The earthen bricks left to be dried up. They provide the material for building new houses

Vol. IV FEBRUARY 1964 No. 11
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CONTENTS

LETTERS 1

LONG LIVE THE COMMUNITY SPIRIT 2

A RESURGENT PANCHAYAT OF KERALA 5

LOK SABHA QUESTIONS & ANSWERS 7

THE DILEMMA STILL PERSISTS—*M. Rajasekhara Reddy* 8

A PRINCIPAL OFFERS TIPS TO OUR WORKERS—*V. D. Veerakyathiah* 10

COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE—SOME GLIMPSES 12

FROM THE CENTRE .. 14

EDITOR : VISHNU DUTT

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LETTERS

AN IDLE HOPE

Sir,

IN SPITE OF various statements and assurances by the Government the social and economic condition of the weaker sections, particularly the Harijans, remains as bad as ever. But for some small loans under the Rural Housing Scheme, they have practically received no other help or encouragement under the C.D. programme to better their lot. The recommendations of the Study Group on the Welfare of the Weaker Sections, have come and gone. Similarly, the recommendations made by the Mehta Committee that credit be linked with marketing so that loans could be advanced against prospective harvests, have also borne no fruit so far. No amount of Reports or Group Studies by the Government are going to benefit the Weaker Sections unless something practical is done to ameliorate their condition. It is the privileged classes, the "Haves" who occupy all positions of vantage in the Panchayati Raj bodies from top to bottom. Unfortunately even the State Governments have done precious little to implement the essential recommendations of the above referred Committees. Under these circumstances, it is an idle hope to expect any material change in the lot of the Weaker Sections.

Yours etc.,
RATTAN SINGH

2-1-1964
PALAM
DELHI

* * * *

DEFENCE LABOUR BANK

Sir,

THE DEFENCE LABOUR BANK Scheme envisages 12 days' labour in a year or the contribution of a fixed amount in lieu thereof calculated at the rate of the prevalent daily labour wages. It would be more in the fitness of things if everybody were required to put in physical labour and the exception regarding the contribution in terms of money were made only in case of the physically invalid persons. That would add dignity to labour and be more in consonance with the socialist spirit. However, if this provision is to be kept at all, the exempted people should be asked to contribute money keeping in view their earning capacity and not the prevalent rate of the daily labour wages. This would be consistent with the socialist principle, "From each according to his capacity to each according to his needs."

Yours etc.,
P. R. MOHANTY

15-12-63.
HIRAKUD,
ORISSA.

LONG LIVE THE COMMUNITY SPIRIT !

NOT VERY far from the Capital of India, to be exact, only 15 miles away, one may see a new village Sungarpur coming up in Alipur Development Block. The eighty families living there have been the victims of Nature's vagaries and man's apathy and ill-planning. They are stretching out their hands to get the minimum human requirements,—a roof over their heads, two square meals a day and clothes to protect them from severe cold. Most of them have not yet succeeded in getting them.

The Rising Village

Ironically enough, their trials and tribulations began thirteen years ago, about the same time when the Community Development Programme was launched in the country to better the lot of the villagers. Their old village was then located about a mile from the present site towards the East on the bank of the Jamuna. The message of "Community Development through Self-help" stirred them deeply. Under their young leader Prem Raj, they were always in the frontline to develop their village with the help of the technical guidance and material facilities offered by the Block. Theirs was one of the first villages to get the streets paved and to provide sanitary drinking water wells and public latrines. They built one mile long approach road through shramdan. They soon constructed two buildings,—one to serve as a Community Centre and the other a Primary Schools building at a cost of Rs. 5,000 The farmers who are a hardy lot, raised their agricultural output, particularly vegetables, sufficiently high through the use of improved seeds and vegetables. Their economic prosperity rose high.

The rapid pace at which this small village strove to go ahead marked it out as one of the most progressive villages of the Block. This aroused the jealously of the gods, as it were. The Jamuna which had been flowing peacefully by for ages past became erratic and suddenly began to change its course. It began to nibble the village bit by bit every year. For ten long years the villagers withstood their ground and did not like to leave the home of their ancestors. But the Jamuna, it seems, was determined to make the village its bed. Five years ago, it was the fury of a dust-storm that blew away the tiled roof of the Community Centre and the thatched huts of the poor. The rest of the job was done by the furious waters of the flooded Jamuna.

The Floods Came

The gurgling waters of the river began to swallow house after house. It soon became obvious that the whole village would be submerged in the river. The Community Centre, the Primary School building, the sanitary wells and all other public works which the villagers had raised through their common toil and cash contributions and which had made their village a pride of the Development Block, came to naught. The villagers had to leave with a heavy heart their hearths and homes. It was indeed a pathetic sight when an old woman Mam Kaur refused to leave her home even though the swift currents of the Jamuna had almost washed away half the foundations of her small house. She wanted to be left alone. She had decided to be part of the sacred river itself. It was with great difficulty that the crying, struggling woman was dragged out of her house by her neighbours.

The Government authorities came to their rescue and arranged immediate relief for them by providing them food and fodder. Their land revenue was also exempted. The biggest problem was their permanent rehabilitation. The Government acquired some land belonging to a nearby village Bakhtawarpur. Out of this, a portion was reserved as the abadi land for the new village. Each plot measuring 10′×12′ was given to a family on payment of Rs. 100 only. Two or even three plots were purchased by some of the land owners who were comparatively better off. But the Weaker Sections, particularly some of the Harijans felt a pinch even in paying this amount. They had to take a loan from others in order to be able to purchase the plots.

The Old Spirit at work

Prem Raj who had been re-elected Pradhan played a leading role in rehabilitating the new village. The old community spirit was at work again. Eighteen feet wide roads were laid across the village. These were paved with bricks. A Community Centre and a Primary School building were also constructed. New houses began to spring up. It looked as though the village would become a model one in the entire Block. That was four years ago.

Trials and Tribulations

When I visited the village a few days ago, it presented a picture of gloom and desolation. Hardly any progress had been made. Due to poverty several people could not build any house so far. Some of them have been provided temporary shelter in the Community Centre itself. Others have just managed to raise a one-roomed kacha tenement to provide them shelter against the bitter cold. Only fifty persons have been able to construct some sort of a house so far. "What is the reason for this slow progress of house-building activity ?" I asked. Prem Raj replied, "Poverty, what else ?"

"But haven't the Government advanced some loans for house-building ?"

"We were promised a loan of Rs. 1,500 for each house. But after years of persistent efforts, only five or six of us have been able to get the promised loan."

"What about the Harijans ?"

"Only two out of eleven persons have got the same."

As I went round, I saw deep pits in front of almost every house. In the rainy season, these pits become full of water and are a source of trouble and ill-health to the dwellers. On inquiry, I learnt that these pits have been formed because of the earth having been dug out from there for constructing the houses.

"But could you not bring this earth from some nearby tank or the village common waste land ?" I asked.

Prem Raj replied, "Our greatest difficulty is that no common land has been allotted to our

Chander carpenter at work

village. We are experiencing great difficulty in grazing our cattle. The neighbouring villages would not permit us to do so in their common waste land." Continuing he said, "If we had our own common land, all of us would have dug out earth for building the houses from there and automatically we would have thereby formed a village pond which is so essential for our cattle." Someone from the group standing by remarked, "We haven't got a place even for our dead cattle to be disposed of." A wag went a step further and said, "Sir, we thank our stars that the neighbouring village Bakhtawarpur has been good enough to permit our dead persons to be burnt in their crematorium for we have no such place in our village."

They had no place even for keeping the dung-cakes. Their huge piles littered the area and gave it an odd and unhygienic appearance.

One cannot understand why any common land was not planned for this new village. Prem Raj told me that in the beginning a considerably large area had been acquired for the village, but later on for some unknown reasons, a portion of it was derequisitioned and handed back to the owners.

Unemployment and poverty seemed to be writ large on the face of almost every inhabitant. Little agriculture and no industry seemed to be the order of the day. Their cultivated area had dwindled from 1,200 acres to 50 acres only and this too was owned by two or three persons only. The rest of the cultivators numbering about fifty

tried to make a living by undertaking cultivation on tenancy basis. But the new Land Reforms measures discouraged the landowners from giving the land to them for cultivation. Scores of cultivators were now leading a life of enforced idleness. It was pointed out that in the vicinity, there lay about 100 acres of evacuee land under cultivation and that this could be allotted to them for cultivation. It was further stated that, at present, this land was being utilised by unauthorised persons and the Government was not getting any land revenue from that.

The condition of the landless agricultural labourers was indeed pathetic. There was the 30 years old Shanti, a Harijan woman, who had been widowed last year. She had four children, all below twelve years. She got for a month the job of feeding the oven for boiling sugar-cane juice. She managed to get odd jobs from time to time. But she was now without any work. It was shocking to know that she had not had a morsel of bread to eat since yesterday. The whole family passed the bitter cold night shivering in just two cotton sheets.

Chander, the carpenter, complained that with the decline in agricultural operations, his income had also gone down considerably. He got some foodgrains from each cultivator every year for repairing the ploughs etc. This year he had got hardly 12 maunds of grains which sufficed his family of eight for barely 4 months. He is supplementing his income by keeping a cow and a buffalo. Their milk when sold brings him a daily income of Rupee one only.

Smt. Shanti, a Harijan widow and her few worldly belongings

The Future

Their poor economic condition was typical of the village as a whole. I could not help looking back twelve years ago when this village, bubbling with enthusiasm was well set on the road to development. But for the natural calamities, the village would probably have been a top ranking one in agricultural production, vegetable growing and other development activities. With proper planning, the hardships and difficulties faced by the villagers could have been minimised to a large extent. Wisely handled, even evil may yield some good. The shifting of the entire village to a new site had provided an excellent opportunity of laying out a model village with well-planned houses. Liberal loans under the Rural Housing Scheme or any other scheme would have helped them to raise a model village of their dreams. Further they had a right to work. If large chunks of their cultivated lands had become the bed of the river, they deserved to be given other alternative lands for cultivation. But somehow the opportunities were missed and the result is their present misery. However, what impressed me was that even amidst this sad plight, their spirit remained as energetic and irrepressible as ever. Not one of them had a grouse against anyone. With stoic calm, they had taken all the adversities in their stride and they are looking to the future with hope and confidence. Their leader Prem Raj who had been elected Pradhan twice before was not elected this time because his village having been shifted to another place had now been grouped with another neighbouring village much bigger in size and population. Even this loss of his status and the power to do good to his village had not deterred him from hoping and striving for the best interests of his village. Long live the Community Spirit !

●

A Resurgent Panchayat of Kerala

IT WAS more than a year ago that the little-known Panchayat of Kadinamkulam sprang up into prominence, having been adjudged as the best in the whole district of Trivandrum in Kerala. The story of its steady development from a poor backward village to a prosperous and progressive one over a period of seven years is truly remarkable and highly instructive.

The success story of this Panchayat proves again the well known fact that the raising of the social and economic standard of a community depends on the human element more than the material resources. And this is as it should be. After all, how else can the minds and habits of a whole group of people be changed? Luckily, the members of the Panchayat and the Co-operatives of this village are honest and hard-working people. In the person of Shri Mohammed Ibrahim they have got a conscientious Gram Sevak, dedicated to his job. Little wonder that he was adjudged the best Gram Sevak of the district. His predecessors, too, did their best to develop the Panchayat and but for their hard work and guidance, the Panchayat would not have been where it is today.

Shri Mohammed Ibrahim, Gram Sevak

It also proves that to achieve lasting results, the Sahkari Samaj and Panchayati Raj should go together hand in hand. Fishing and Coir-making having been organised on co-operative basis, have contributed a lot to the economic development of the people. Other activities moulded on co-operative lines are chalk-manufacturing, brick-manufacturing, and brush-manufacturing.

FISHING FOR A LIVING

The Panchayat having an area of 5 sq. miles and a population of 10,000, is situated within the precincts of the Kazhakuttam Development Block, bordering the southernmost tip of the country.

In the coastal areas, the bulk of the people depend upon fishing for a living. For long, long years these simple fisher-folk had been fishing in the surrounding ocean waters with obsolete equipment and outmoded craft. Few of them owned fishing vessels or gear. The precarious living they wrested from the turbulent sea was wholly disproportionate to their hazardous toil. It was but natural that with their indigenous fishing gear and craft their catch should be scanty. The formation of a Fisheries Co-operative Society marked the starting of a new life for the fisher-folk. Ably guided by the Gram Sevak, this new institution was able to popularise within a remarkably short span of time, new nylon fishing nets in place of the obsolete ones. During the last three years, nylon worth Rs. 14,000 was imported, made into nets and distributed by this society. Today, about one hundred nylon nets are used by the fishermen of Kadinamkulam. With the strong new nets, the fisher-folk are able to enhance their catch considerably. The *per capita* income of the fishermen has increased appreciably. The society is now briskly popularising the use of trawler nets for use in the mechanised fishing boats. A nylon net-making centre has also been organised under the auspices of this co-operative society. The nylon net-weaver gets an average of Rs. 4 per day for his labours. But the co-opera-

Hand pumps have been installed to provide the much-needed irrigation supplies for the fields

tive society has not remained content with these efforts to emancipate the fisher-folk from the throes of poverty. The society is currently engaged in applying new scientific techniques to the problem of marketing the catch and also introducing modern equipment and other fishing gear to place the fishing industry on a sound basis. From very modest beginnings, the society has today grown to be the centre of hope of hundreds of fisher-folk families.

THE COIR INDUSTRY

As one moves from the sandy coastal areas towards the hinterland, the grating sound of innumerable coir spindles in action falls on one's ears. A sizeable section of the coir workers consists of women and children. The reorganisation of the coir industry in Kadinamkulam along co-operative lines has substantially alleviated the lot of the coir workers. The coir industrial co-operative society organised in 1958 has today a membership of 356 and a capital outlay of Rs. 25,000. This society is gradually gaining strength.

IMPROVED CULTIVATION

The sandy soil without adequate irrigation facilities does not hold out bright prospects of a rich crop. Yet, as a result of the changed outlook of the agriculturists and their hard labour, paddy cultivation has undergone a revolutionary change. The farmers have learnt the value of fertilisers, compost, green manure and improved seeds in obtaining plentiful crops. Today they are following what is known as the "Japanese method of cultivation," with gusto. They are also enthusiastic in donating free labour for minor irrigation works like field channels. Improved varieties of paddy seeds are now being used in more than 300 out of 354 acres under paddy cultivation. Till a few years ago, it was hard to find even a few acres of improved paddy cultivation in the whole village.

TAPIOCA AND PULSES

In order to augment their income, the cultivators have taken to the cultivation of tapioca and pulses on a widespread basis. To meet the shortage of water supplies for their fields, they have even installed hand-pumps for the purpose. The cost of digging a hand-pump comes to about Rs. 100 only. The cultivators are now getting an average yield of 20 pounds of tapioca from a single shoot by cultivating the M-4 variety of tapioca. A record crop of 38 lbs. from a single plant was achieved by one of the cultivators. In addition to these crops, many farmers in Kadinamkulam now produce vegetables sufficient for their home consumption.

COCONUT PALMS

As in other parts of Kerala, in Kadinamkulam, it is the coconut palm which holds the palm in securing a living for most of the people. The cultivators are doing their best to increase its yield by planting saplings of improved variety. The coconut Nursery run under the auspices of the Kazhakuttom Block has already distributed

(Continued on page 16)

A view of the coconut nursery maintained by the Young Farmers' Club

Lok Sabha Questions & Answers

Below we give a summary of some of the questions raised and answers given in the Winter Session of the Lok Sabha—EDITOR.

Q. Are there any shortcomings in the constitution of and the powers vested in Zila Parishads in certain States?

A. While it is yet too early to say categorically whether there are any inherent shortcomings in the constitution and powers of Zila Parishads, the experience gained so far indicates that the Zila Parishad has tended to become ineffective where it is a mere advisory and co-ordinating body without any specific executive responsibilities.

Q. What is the machinery for reviewing the working of the Panchayati Raj in various States?

A. The problems that arise in the implementation of Panchayati Raj are under constant review and the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation assists the State Governments in identifying the problems and in working out solutions on the basis of All India experience. In Mysore and Assam, several aspects relating to the working of Panchayati Raj have been studied by State-level committees and their reports are being examined by the respective State Governments. In Rajasthan, a State-level committee is now engaged in studying various aspects of Panchayati Raj, including the organisation of Panchayati Raj institutions at different levels.

Q. How far the recommendations of the study group on the welfare of the Weaker Sections of the Village Community have been implemented?

A. Various aspects of the programme financed principally out of the C.D. budget have been examined by the Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation and instructions have been issued that they may be suitably oriented in order to meet the needs of the weaker sections. The following suggestions have been made to the State Governments/Union Territories to enable the Panchayati Raj institutions to play their part in the welfare of the weaker sections :—

(a) Amounts allotted for special schemes for backward classes should be routed through the block and an integrated programme drawn up for implementation.

(b) Panchayati Raj bodies should earmark a percentage of their budget provision every year for schemes of special benefit to the weaker sections.

(c) Special Committees of Panchayati Raj bodies at the district, block and village levels should be set up to look after the welfare of the weaker sections.

(d) Periodical review of the programmes for the weaker sections should be undertaken by the Panchayati Raj bodies at the various levels.

Q. What progress has so far been made in the setting up of Defence Labour Banks in the country?

A. Defence Labour Banks have been set up in most of the Panchayats. Up to the end of October, 1,006 lakh man-days have been received as donations to the Bank. Works of the value of about Rs. 1.25 crores have been done on the basis of 85 lakh man-days utilised so far. The main difficulty experienced has been the slow progress in the utilisation of labour donations, which is primarily due to the lack of organisational effort for drawing up detailed work programmes.

Q. What is the progress of cheaper credit being made available to the agriculturists through various agencies? How far has it been possible to implement the principle of advancing loans for "creditworthy purposes" rather than to "creditworthy persons"?

A. Short and medium term credit is made available by the primary agricultural credit societies at the village level. The total loans advanced by them to the agriculturists in 1960-61 were of the order of Rs. 202.75 crores, and it was estimated that this had gone up to nearly Rs. 228.00 crores in 1961-62. Long term loans to agriculturists are provided through land

(*Continued on page 16*)

THE DILEMMA STILL PERSISTS

M. RAJASEKHARA REDDY

RAJU AND Narayan hailed from the same village and both of them had passed Matriculation examination in the Second Division. While Raju was studying in High School, he seriously thought of improving the lot of villagers since their poor economic condition touched him deeply. He himself belonged to a poor farmer's family and very well knew the pinch of poverty.

The parents of Raju and Narayan dreamt that their sons would be well placed in life in some conventional jobs. Raju was however anxious to prosecute his studies further while Narayan was thinking of taking some job. Raju's father was adamant and he did not like his son to continue his studies further. Raju being an obedient son decided to take some appointment.

One day Shri Muniswamy, father of Raju and Shri Ramiah, father of Narayan met under a Peepal tree and both of them advised their sons to seek some employment. Narayana preferred to become a clerk in the Collector's Office. Narayana's father endorsed the choice of his son. Raju desired to become a Gramsevak as this job was dear to his heart. Shri Muniswamy wished that his son should become a Revenue Inspector. He, therefore, expressed disapproval of his son's proposal. Narayana's father Ramiah also advised Raju not to go after the job of a Gram Sevak as there were no bright prospects there. His argument was that he would have to waste lot of time and energy in training and then in battling with conservative rural folk who did not respond wholeheartedly to the Community Development tenets and programmes. He also added that a Revenue Inspector was an officer controlling a host of patels, *shanbhogues* and also people in general. It was suggested that he could become a junior auditor in the Co-operative Department if he did not like the job of a Revenue Inspector. The odds were against Raju but he persisted. In spite of these tempting advice he did not budge an inch. Seeing this, Raju's father gave up all attempts at persuading him to follow the career of a Revenue Inspector.

Reaching home Raju's father did not talk to anyone. He was in such a sullen mood that he did not even take his meals. Raju's mother seeing this strange and depressed mood of her husband asked him the reason for that. He sighed and said, "Our life-long ambition of seeing Raju a Revenue Inspector has been dashed to the ground. Raju has set his face against this idea. Instead, he would like to become a poor Gram Sevak,—the sort of fellow whom you see going round from house to house, inquiring about our requirements of seeds and fertilizers ......" She knew her son better. She, therefore, counselled her husband more patience and said, "We should not impose our ideas on Raju anymore. He is grown up now and knows his welfare as much as we do." Seeing no other choice, Muniswamy had to give in. Heaving a sigh, he said, "If that is the firm view of all of you why should I stand in your way?" So saying, he reluctantly allowed Raju to do as he pleased.

Raju was happy that at long last he would be able to realise his cherished ambition. But it was not an unmixed joy to him for he knew that his father was not happy at this decision.

Raju applied for the post of a Gram Sevak and Narayana for that of a clerk. Luckily, both were selected. Narayana was posted in the Collector's Office immediately. But Raju had to undergo an intensive training for two years before he was posted as a Gram Sevak in a Development Block far removed from his home. He went to his circle with missionary zeal, contacted patels, *shanbhogues* and other elders of the village and explained to them the object of the Community Development programme and the mission with which he had come to serve them. He sought their goodwill and co-operation in the task. These village Officers were rather averse to his views and sometimes they would frankly tell him that they were preoccupied with other Government duties such as collection of revenue etc. and they had no time to implement his suggestions. Not unoften, they actually opposed what he planned and did. But Raju was not disheartened and as a conscientious worker, he persisted in his mission of exhorting the people to build a richer and better commu-

nity life. He organised Yuvak Mandals, Gram Sahayak camps and carried on a number of other activities envisaged under the Development Plans.

As years rolled by, the Government adopted Panchayati Raj as a step towards activising people's participation in their own development. This had the desired effect. He now had a number of allies on his side to work with, *viz*, the Chairman Village Panchayat and other members of the Panchayat. It was through them that he now executed the development plans. In a few years, the village had an approach road built, a new building for the primary school also came up, the village streets were paved, a Panchayat Ghar was built and a storage godown of the co-operative society also came up. These were outward symbols of the advancement of the village. But Raju was not satisfied.

He knew that agricultural production had not made as much progress as it should have done. Although, three or four progressive farmers had done very well. But one swallow does not make summer. He wanted all the farmer families to come up to that standard. He fully reciprocated the anxiety and concern expressed by the leaders of the nation who lamented that the country had not yet become self-sufficient in foodgrains. The memorable words of the Prime Minister uttered at the last conference of the Development Commissioners that agriculture was the main job, everything else being secondary, echoed in his ears again and again. He bent all his energies towards accomplishing this Herculean task. He contacted a number of farmers' families and helped them in the preparation of their production plans. Based on these family plans, the Village Production Plan was formulated. As a result of the timely supplies of improved seeds, fertilisers, insecticides and well irrigation facilities, the agricultural production increased.

Then came the unprovoked Chinese invasion on our country. The rural masses were stirred to a man as they never had done before. Raju, taking advantage of the new upsurge of enthusiasm amongst the village people, vigorously pushed forward the agricultural development Plans. He fully utilised the V.V.F. and the D.L.B. schemes to increase food production in the village.

Raju had to work hard. He used to talk to people till late at night because it was only after dusk that the farmers returned from their fields. Raju's wife had become accustomed to his coming home late and somehow reconciled her lot with the situation. But once Raju did not return home although it was past midnight. A strange fear and anxiety overtook her. She was lying wide awake in her bed. The faint light emitted by the Kerosene lantern was hardly able to dispel the enveloping darkness. Leaving her three small babies alone in the room, she came out to the doorsteps to see if Raju was coming. She waited and waited but there were no signs of her husband coming home. All sorts of thoughts came into her mind,—the dense forests and the winding hillocks that lay across; the evil intentioned dacoits. . . !!! She gave a shriek and could think no more! She must have remained in that state for quite some time when she heard the knocking at the door and opened it. Her beloved Raju had come. There were tears in her eyes. She did not utter a word. Raju realised what the matter was. It was not for the first time he had returned home so late. Like a guilty man he begged her to be excused and added, "I was attending the meeting of the Gram Sabha which had been called to discuss the Village Production Plan." Mrs. Raju snapped back, "Yes: your Village Plans would go on endlessly. Have you ever thought of a plan for your family? The eldest son Venkata is going without a warm coat in this cold winter. And the young baby is down with fever. You had not the time to take her to the doctor." Raju did not reply. Warming up, his wife remarked, "Venkata will be passing the Vth Primary from the village school in March this year. How about his further education? The nearest school is five miles away. Had you been in the town, all these difficulties would not have cropped up. Look at your friend Narayana employed in the Collector's Office. Being at the District Headquarters town, his family is enjoying all the amenities and facilities of a modern life." Raju thought it more expedient not to enter into controversy with his wife at that time. He spared her the usual sermon on the noble profession of a Gram Sevak.

Weeks and months passed by. Raju's routine continued as before. He had not gone on leave for

(*Continued on page 16*)

TIPS TO OUR WORKERS

V. D. VEERAKYATHIAH

THE AUTHOR *is the Principal of the Young Farmers' Training Centre at Bangalore. From his experience he gives below a few tips to the official as well as non-official functionaries of Panchayati Raj. They may find them useful in their day-to-day working in the field.*—EDITOR.

PANCHAYATI RAJ was introduced with a view to inspire the village people to take greater interest in the planning and execution of their own welfare and development. The officials no longer remained the only actors in the drama. The elected representatives of the people at various levels,—the village, Taluka and the district also came into the picture. It were they who became the real planners and executors of the Development Programmes. The officials who had so far enjoyed the monopoly of directing the policies and programmes were now to serve as guides and helpers. Such a fundamental change in their working relationship *vis a vis* each other was bound to give rise to some confusion, misunderstanding and lack of trust in each other. However, with lapse of time, they have begun to understand each other's role much better. It is on a clear and correct understanding of each other's role that the progress of Panchayati Raj depends. Here are a few guiding principles for them :

OFFICIAL FUNCTIONARIES

(1) You must realise that you have to deal with human beings and, therefore, whatever you think or do should be inspired by a human approach rather than a cold and wooden approach as is often found in the Government Offices.

(2) Understand the background of the non-official with whom you are working and try to adjust yourself with him.

(3) Never give occasion to rub each other. Patiently try to avoid a situation of conflict.

(4) Give due recognition to the decisions taken by the Panchayati Raj Institutions and implement them promptly and faithfully.

(5) Don't forget that you are not the decision-making authority nor a policy maker. Your job is to carry out the policies laid down by the non-official bodies. In case, the decision is contrary to the provisions of the Act or the Rules, it is your duty to bring the same to the notice of the authorities for clarification.

(6) You should not have the feeling that you are being bossed over. After all, the non-officials are our countrymen and they are the representatives of our people whom we are to serve.

(7) There would be some interference from the public and their representatives at various stages of your work. They want your little favours like the construction of a road, school etc. in their areas. The safest course to avoid the possible charge of favouritism against you is to get the approval of the Panchayati Raj bodies for all such schemes.

(8) You should not confine yoursef to the Panchayati Raj bodies only. Your contacts should be as wide as possible. Take genuine interest in the programmes meant for the common people as a whole. You should establish personal contacts with individual families rather than depend upon their representatives only.

(9) The non-official representatives with whom you are working may not be clever in handling things. You will have to deal with them carefully with all sincerity to make them understand the real situation and to help them to take proper decisions.

(10) Do not forget that the non-officials are more experienced and know their area and people better than you.

(11) The village people and their representatives are accustomed to judging people by their personal character and behaviour. Therefore, you should be very careful in what you say and do before them in public.

(12) You might have more expert knowledge on a subject than the non-officials. But through past experience the non-officials have developed a sound commonsense. You should give due weight to their opinions and judgment.

(13) Don't shirk to take responsibility on you but at the same time don't try to encroach upon the powers of the non-officials.

(14) You should have full faith in the philosophy and programme of Democratic Decentralisation which Panchayati Raj is.

(15) Be bold enough to offer suggestions without fear or favour.

(16) Taking work from others and building leadership is an art which you must try to learn through experience.

NON-OFFICIAL FUNCTIONARIES

(1) In your enthusiasm for getting more benefits for your area, please do not involve the officials to commit irregularities.

(2) Be kind and sympathetic towards your executives.

(3) Give free scope to the officials to work along the policies laid down by the Panchayati Raj institutions and do not interfere frequently in the day-to-day administrative matters.

(4) Avoid getting personal favours from the officials.

(5) Give due recognition to the good work of the officials.

(6) Use your good offices to get several complicated things done at a higher level where your officials may not be able to do much.

(7) Don't have the attitude of bossing over the officials. Treat them as your colleagues and encourage them to give you sincere and frank advice fearlessly.

(8) You must be a hard and sincere worker yourself; then only you can inspire the officials to work devotedly.

(9) Before taking a final decision, discuss the issue with the concerned officials, technical as well as executive. Give due regard to their advice on technical matters and financial and administrative rules and regulations.

(10) The officials with whom you have to work in your area may be coming from different parts of your State or country. It is your duty to make him feel at home and to get acquainted with the local people, their customs and social habits.

(11) Criticising or scolding an official before the public or his subordinates even if he is wrong is not proper. You may talk to him in private and warn him if necessary.

(12) Be kind and considerate towards the personal problems of the officials. In case they need your help and co-operation to settle certain things, you may not disappoint them.

(13) Do not form your opinion or impression on the basis of what you hear from somebody. Always try to have first-hand and direct information and convince yourself with the situation.

(14) A popular official in your area is an asset. Do not look upon him as your rival. Use his popularity for promoting the policies and programmes laid down by the Panchayati Raj institutions.

(15) Give equal treatment to all the sections of people irrespective of the fact whether or not they supported you during the elections.

CORRIGENDUM

We regret that in the December '63 issue of our journal, it had been wrongly stated that the Best Gram Sevika selected at the National level Competition had been awarded a prize of Rs. 2,500. As a matter of fact, due to the National Emergency, the award of Cash Prize has since been discontinued.—EDITOR.

Community on the Move

STEPPING UP GRAPE CULTIVATION

WITH A VIEW to encourage the poorer sections of the population to grow grapes, Punjab Government has decided to give subsidy at the rate of Rs. 10 per plant to those who are growing at least four plants in their houses. The maximum limit of the subsidy will be Rs. 100. Harijans and the families of the defence personnel, who have planted two plants, will also be eligible for the subsidy. Field growers will be given subsidy at the rate of Rs. 10 per vine, subject to the maximum limit of Rs. 500 in each case. No subsidy will be given to those whose total annual income is more than Rs. 3,000.

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THE YOUTH CONSTRUCT REST HOUSE

IN A DEEP semi-circular valley covered with green foliage and located in-between the ranges of the Vindhyachal mountain in Jobat tahsil of the Jhabua district is situated a small and neat village named Bhabara. This was brought under Block Development programme from April 1, 1961. The Youth of the village immediately took up the work of construction of a village rest house with their own contributions in cash, kind and labour. The cost of the rest house has been estimated at Rs. 4,000. The 'shramdan' offered by the villagers in construction of the rest house has entitled the village Panchayat to secure first prize of Rs. 1,444 for the best work done with shramdan.

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PANCHAYATS ELECTED UNANIMOUSLY

IN THE PUNJAB, ten panchayats have been elected unanimously in Mohindergarh district in the second round of panchayat elections. The panchayats are Kheri, Badopuri, Kultajpur, Myee, Bhojawas, Basnuta, Saidalipi, Bucholi, Nihalawas and Sisot. In village Sisot, chairman of the panchayat Samiti Mohindergarh has been re-elected, Sarpanch unanimously.

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105 MDS. OF PADDY PER ACRE

SHRI RAMANAND Panoria of village Kasturbod in the Bagbahra Block of the Raipur district has obtained the highest produce of paddy crop in the block-level crop competition for 1963-64. The yield in his field was over 105 mds. per acre. Shri Ramanand had used the improved methods of farming and taken advantage of expert guidance from the officials of the package programme. It is noteworthy that a single paddy plant in his field had as many as seventy-five fillers.

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ROAD COMPLETED THROUGH DEFENCE LABOUR BANK

THE RESIDENTS of Talwadia village in Chhegaon Makhan Block in East Nimar district of Madhya Pradesh working under the aegis of their Defence Labour Bank, have constructed a two and a half mile long fair-weather road. To complete this task, 275 members of the Bank, including 75 women, took a pledge to work for 8 hours daily till the road was completed. Accordingly, they worked for five and half days continuously and completed the 20 feet broad 2½ miles long fair-weather road with their voluntary efforts. The cost of the work done by them is estimated at Rs. 2,062.

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SCHOOL BUILDING THROUGH PEOPLE'S CONTRIBUTION

THE PEOPLE of Anarad village in the Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh contributed over fifty per cent of the cost of the primary school building constructed in their village. The total cost of the building is Rs. 8,249 out of which Government grant is Rs. 4,000 and people's share is Rs. 2,000 worth 'shramdan', Rs. 1,749 cash and Rs. 500 from Gram Panchayat Umaria.

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FISHERIES BOOST INCOME OF ORISSA PANCHAYATS

THE PANCHAYATS of Orissa offer a striking example of the tremendous enthusiasm that may be released as a result of entrusting the ownership and responsibility of community assets to them. Ever since the ownership of 40,000 village tanks was transferred to them two years ago, they have been taking keen interest in the raising

—Some Glimpses

of their revenues through the development of fisheries. During the year 1961-62 the Panchayats have stocked 88 lakh fish fingerlings and earned Rs. 5.84 lakhs as revenue. On an average each Panchayat Samiti has stocked 55,000 fish fingerlings, which is the highest for the whole of India. The State is now able to meet a major portion of its seed requirements from within the resources of the State itself only about 10% of the first seed is imported from Calcutta.

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A CLEAN VILLAGE

A PICTURE of cleanliness—that is how Madhopur village in the Deomai Block of Fatehpur district may be described today. Seven years ago, a city-dweller, Sri Brahma Din Shukla, decided to make the village his permanent abode with the idea to serve the people there. The village at that time was infested with mosquitoes. It had no roads or drains or clean drinking water wells. Sri Shukla had a tough job in fighting the prejudices of the village people and making them take interest in hard work. His perseverance, vision, sympathy and personal example did at long last have the desired effect. The village roads today have all been paved and an efficient system of drainage has been provided. It has a school with 30 students on its rolls. Each family has a chaff-cutter and each cultivator has taken to scientific methods of sowing and farming. Village wells have been protected against pollution and a road connects the village with the nearest trunk road.

The change has led to an improvement in the economy of the village. The standard of living of the people has gone up and their health is much better than what it used to be. Village urchins no longer loiter about anywhere and everywhere; they have a playground and a school to go to. Village women, who traditionally had been keeping away from public life, are new keen participants in development work. Three of them are members of the panchayat. A village volunteer corps has so much captured the imagination of the village youth that in its training programme for civil defence, every able-bodied youth takes a live interest.

A PROGRESSIVE VILLAGE

PEOPLE'S co-operative efforts carried on with unflinching perseverance can bring forth rich fruits. This has been well demonstrated by the people of village Pipalya Gopal in Shajapur district in Madhya Pradesh who, with their contribution of Rs. 50,000 in cash and shramdan as against Government grant of Rs. 12,500 have completed many useful construction works in their village. It is a small village with a population of about 500. The villagers constructed a Panchayat Bhawan at a cost of Rs. 2,500, the Government contribution being Rs. 1,000 only. Near this Panchayat Bhawan, two school buildings have also been constructed. The Government granted Rs. 2,500 for these buildings while the villagers contributed Rs. 6,000 in cash and shramdan. For drinking water, the people of this village have sunk 4 pucca wells at a total cost of Rs. 7,000, the Government aid being Rs. 3,000. Besides, they have constructed about 1½ miles of road to connect their village with Shajapur-Berchha road. As against the Government grant of Rs. 7,000 for this road the villagers have offered shramdan and cash to the tune of Rs. 10,000. As a result of this road, the villagers are now getting better return from the town for their village produce.

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VILLAGE VOLUNTEER FORCE ACTIVE IN YELLAREDDY BLOCK

THE VILLAGE Volunteer Force and the Defence Labour Bank schemes were organised in Gandi Masanipet village of the Panchayat Samithi Block, Yellareddy in Andhra Pradesh with an initial membership of 186 men and 119 women. The village Volunteer Force took upon itself the responsibility of contacting each one of the 170 families to explain about the emergency and the need for increased production. Plans for all the families were prepared and finalised by the Gram Sabha. The Village Volunteer Force also took up the work of repairing field channels, treating of 100% seeds with Agroson and spraying of endrine to control pest. The volunteers helped to bring the entire area of 310 acres under the

(*Continued on page 15*)

FROM THE CENTRE

MEHTA COMMITTEE ON CO-OPERATIVE ADMINISTRATION

THE COMMITTEE on Co-operative Administration headed by Shri Vaikunth Lal Mehta has suggested that State Governments should promote the formation of federal co-operative bodies where they are not in existence, review the working of existing federal institutions and consider the question of transferring to them some of the statutory powers of the Registrar. The Co-operative Societies Act should be amended suitably to provide for such transfer in areas where the conditions are favourable.

The report notes that the co-operative movement, which until a few years ago was mainly concerned with credit, has become diversified and has extended to other fields of economic activity. The responsibilities of the administration have thus become increasingly complex and difficult. It is in this context that the committee has made recommendations for strengthening the staff of the Co-operative Departments of the State Governments. At the same time, it has emphasised that any increase in the size of the Co-operative Departments should not lead to any interference in the day-to-day working of co-operative institutions such as would adversely affect their freedom and autonomy.

In its recommendations, the Committee says that ultimately the supervision of co-operative societies other than primary credit societies should be transferred to appropriate federal agencies, primary credit societies being supervised by central banks. Until, however, systematic arrangements are made within the co-operative sector, supervision has to remain the direct responsibility of the Co-operative Departments.

The Committee lays stress on the need to ensure that extraneous forces, political or otherwise, are not allowed to influence the working of co-operatives, which are essentially business organisations. In this context it expresses the view that any transfer of powers to Panchayati Raj institutions will dilute the responsibility of the Co-operative Departments and will impede progress towards the transfer of authority to federal agencies which will make the movement self-disciplined and self-regulatory.

To ensure objectivity of co-operative audit, the Committee has recommended the setting up within the Co-operative Department of a separate wing exclusively for the purpose of audit, under a Chief Auditor, who would have the rank of Joint Registrar. It is felt that a separate line of command for audit below the Registrar would ensure independence of audit and at the same time provide for audit staff with the right background.

It has made several recommendations for strengthening the Co-operative Departments also.

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S. K. DEY'S ADDRESS

WHILE ADDRESSING the third meeting of the National Council of Study and Research in Community Development, the Union Minister for Community Development and Co-operation, Shri S. K. Dey, has expressed the view that the National Institute of Community Development should function as an autonomous body with financial assistance from the government. He said this would enable the Institute to collaborate effectively with universities and other national and international institutions. He added that as an autonomous institute it would be able to obtain people of high calibre from the universities to work on its staff and also function as an objective agency on behalf of the Ministry.

Shri Dey emphasised the importance of programmes for youth and women, which he said were essential for the success of the Community Development movement. He, however, pointed out that the movement for the promotion of the welfare of women and youth had to be related to definite programmes. He also spoke of the need to associate women with the Applied Nutrition Programme which was in operation in several States and to give them training in working the programme. Shri Dey referred to, what he called, the "halting acceptance" of the programme for setting up Panchayati Raj Training Centres in the various States. He deprecated the absence of

sufficient interest in some States where non-official institutions for training Panchayati Raj officials had been set up; even in such institutions there was lack of trainees. He said his Ministry had offered many concessions to attract trainees, but still the number of trainees was not enough.

The Council, during the three-day session, discussed, among other things, the programme for training and research during the Fourth Plan period. It accepted a proposal to set up 170 Panchayati Raj Training Centres in addition to the 150 centres that would be functioning at the end of the Third Plan. It was also decided to continue the training of Panchayat Secretaries during the Fourth Plan in order to cover all the 1.50 lakh Panchayat Secretaries that would be required to carry out the administrative work of the Panchayats. The Council decided to continue during the Fourth Plan the scheme for the training of technical staff at Block headquarters, including Block Development Officers and Extension Officers.

The Council accepted a proposal to organise general training in leadership etc. for selected women and youth workers during the Fourth Plan period. The training which would relate to definite subjects like poultry, fishery, etc. is to be organised by the subject-matter Ministries concerned. Under the leadership training scheme, an estimated 50,000 women and youth workers are to be trained each year.

The Council noted that arrangements were being made to recruit necessary staff for running three additional Tribal Orientation and Study Centres at Udaipur, Jabalpur and Bhubaneshwar, in addition to the centre already functioning at Ranchi. The Council rejected a proposal to integrate Panchayati Raj Training Centres with Co-operative Training Institutions.

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PROGRESS OF CONSUMER CO-OPERATIVES

7,252 Consumer Co-operative Societies are now functioning in the country. These are in addition to the wholesale and primary stores launched under the centrally sponsored scheme. Out of a target of 200 wholesale and 4,000 primaries under the scheme, 140 wholesale stores and 2,172 primaries have so far been organised. The Centrally sponsored scheme will cover all towns and cities with more than 50,000 population. Another scheme for rural areas for supply of necessities of life through service co-operatives and marketing societies is also being implemented.

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RADIO RURAL FORUMS TO POPULARISE COOPERATIVE FARMING

RADIO RURAL Forums are to be increasingly utilised to popularise programmes like cooperative farming in the rural areas. All India Radio has agreed to arrange suitable broadcasts from its regional stations on the importance of cooperatives in national development with special reference to cooperative farming, in the programmes for rural audiences. This decision has been taken in accordance with a recommendation of the National Cooperative Farming Advisory Board. In this connection, the Union Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation has suggested that the problems of cooperative farming societies in respect of organisation, management, operation, agricultural techniques etc. should be discussed in the Radio Rural Forums to facilitate exchange of experience. It has also been suggested that while allocating new radio sets for the Forums, preference should be given to villages where cooperative farming societies are functioning.

COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

(*Continued from page 13*)

Japanese method of paddy cultivation. The Village Volunteer Force secured 47 weeders. This effort of the Village Volunteer Force is likely to increase production by 25 to 30%. Besides this, the Village Volunteer Force had dug 86 compost pits and 47 urinal trenches and planted about 500 plants for green manure purposes. A 3-furlong internal road was constructed, one insanitary pit closed and 38 soakage pits dug. The 119 women volunteers took up the task of construction of smokeless chulhas, and they also raised 48 kitchen gardens. The Village Volunteeer Fore reorganised the Radio Listening group of the village for effective publicity. The total value of the work done is Rs. 3,700.

A Resurgent Panchayat of Kerala

(*Continued from page 6*)

thousands of such improved varieties of sapling. Their distribution is undertaken by the Young Farmers' Club.

AMENITIES PROGRAMME

The Panchayat has given adequate attention to the amenities programme. Two roads, each a mile long, have been constructed by the people with the help of the block authorities, one connecting Kaniapuram and Vettu Road and the other linking Kaniapuram Pallimukku with Anakkapilla Bridge. These roads facilitate easy transportation of agricultural products, seeds and manures. A notable achievement of the people of Kadinamkulam is the primary Health Centre, built at a cost of Rs. 10,000. The villagers have contributed magnanimously towards the cost of the new building for the Health Centre.

The dirty and unhygienic slums that formerly marred the face of Kadinamkulam are giving way to small pretty brick houses that are fast rising throughout the length and breadth of the Panchayat. New model houses are being constructed at Alillathura. Six model houses have already been completed.

The cultural aspect of the life of the Panchayat has received due attention. Five libraries, seven sports clubs and two children's organisations cater to the requirements of the community. Women's and Children's organisations are also active in their respective spheres. At the youth festivals organised by the Block authorities, the Kadinamkulam football team won the Championship twice.

Kadinamkulam symbolises the resurgent villages of India rising up under the impact of the C.D. Programme, Panchayati Raj and the Sahkari Samaj.

LOK SABHA QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

(*Continued from page 7*)

mortgage banks. Long term loans outstanding at the end of 1961-62 were Rs. 37.78 crores and the provisional estimates for 1961-62 were Rs. 49.50 crores. Besides, the state governments were also advancing takavi loans directly to agriculturists. A sum of Rs. 40.97 crores was advanced by state governments in 1960-61 as takavi loans. The present policy is that takavi loans for normal production purposes should generally be routed through co-operatives according to a phased programme. The state governments have been advised to encourage co-operatives to give short and medium term loans up to Rs. 500 on the basis of actual production requirements and repaying capacity without insisting on mortgage of immovable property.

Q. How does the Reserve Bank advance loans for financing agricultural operations?

A. The Reserve Bank of India provides financial accommodation to State Co-operative Banks by fixing credit limits every year on behalf of the various central co-operative banks affiliated to them which in turn finance the agricultural societies. The short term credits are given to the co-operative banks at a concessional rate of 2% below the bank rate and are available for financing seasonal agricultural operations.

THE DILEMMA STILL PERSISTS

(*Continued from page 9*)

several years. Now, he took a fortnight's leave and went to spend the time with his aged parents in the village. The old couple was extremely happy to have their son, daughter-in-law and the little grand children with them.

It so happened that after some time, Narayana with his family also came on a few days' leave to the village. One day, Raju and Narayana met under the old Peepal tree. They talked about their experiences and the nature of work they were called upon to perform. It was eight years ago at the same place that both had taken a momentous decision to adopt their present careers. Raju, his face and hands more weather-beaten and rough because of his hard life in the open fields was still a Gram Sevak. Narayana, with a smooth face and polished tongue, looked every inch a 'Babu'. He had since been promoted as an Upper Division Clerk. That he was better off was evident from the fine woollen suit he wore and the smart dresses in which his children frisked about. The misty eyes of Raju's father could not fail to notice this obvious disparity between the economic condition of his son and that of Narayana. He was, of course, not jealous of the latter. He was not yet sure whether his son Raju, by not following his initial advice had committed a blunder. His dilemma was not yet resolved. But the bold and defiant face of Raju pointed to a hopeful future when justice would be done and every worker shall get the reward he deserved.

L145DPD/63—GIPF.

Digging a drain in village Hadiol in Sabarkantha district. The collector is also seen lending a helping hand

V.V.F. IN GUJARAT

The V.V.F. doing Shramdan in village Memadpur in Banaskantha district

Digging 600 ft. long channel at Vavdi village in Panchmahals district

In Panchayati Raj, women as well as men are playing their role to make it a success. Here, an all-women's Panchayat of a Mysore village has invited the village elders to advise them on some important matters.

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